

STUDENT TIPS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The following is a list of tips and strategies students can use to better prepare for an internship and to be more competitive for future employment endeavors.

Tips and Development Strategies:

- Be prepared for your interview - The County will be keenly aware of which students are prepared and ready to meet the challenges of the internship.
- Dress appropriately - You only have one opportunity to make a first impression, so it is important to dress to impress. "Business casual" is a good guide for how to dress for the interview.
- Do some research on the County and department of interest - Interviewers will likely find it very impressive if you are knowledgeable about their operations, processes, or current issues they are managing.
- Prepare some relevant questions of your own - Preparing relevant questions in advance of the interview may impress upon the interview panel that you have a high interest in the County department and/or field of study. The following are some example questions:
 - What is the County/Department's process for hiring interns?
 - How will the internship benefit me?
 - Are there opportunities for regular employment in the County that are available after the internship is complete?
 - What do you like most about working for the County?
 - What does your department do well?
 - What types of issues/difficulties does your department manage on a regular basis?
 - What would a typical work day entail for an intern in your department?
- Be honest, confident, and sincere - Interviewers will likely know if you are not confident or sincere. Having all the right answers is not realistic and will likely stand out to the interviewers. Interviewers may realize you don't have the correct answer, but will appreciate your honesty and sincerity. Also, interviewers may not be listening for a "perfect" response but actually listening for the way you respond to a difficult question; they may be trying to identify your thought process to a unique problem.
- Practice Interviewing - Practicing your interview skills can provide you with a competitive advantage over other internship candidates. It is recommended that you rehearse difficult or frequently asked interview questions, as this may help to reduce your stress and raise your confidence level during the interview process.
 - **Note:** Check with your school's career center to assist you with interviewing techniques and/or mock interviews.
- Be aware of some common interview mistakes:
 - Arriving late
 - Bringing drinks to the interview room

- Using your phone or other electronic devices during the interview
 - Not knowing what's on your own resume
 - Not paying attention
 - Not making good eye contact
 - Poor posture (i.e., slouching in the chair)
 - Taking too much time to answer questions (i.e., rambling)
 - Speaking poorly about prior employers
- Identify the goals you expect to achieve with your internship:
 - Ask yourself, "What do I have to offer the County?"
 - What do you expect to have learned by the end of your internship?
 - Have you thought about performance measures?
 - Volunteer to take on challenging projects - One of the best ways an intern can make a great impression, and any current employee as well, is to volunteer to participate in projects outside of the normal scope of their duties. Volunteering for miscellaneous projects or assignments is a remarkable way to stand out; you may have an opportunity to provide solutions to difficult problems, which will increase your visibility and your skills at the same time.
 - Remember to say "Thank You" - Being respectful to the interviewers is a must. At the conclusion of the interview, thank them for the opportunity to interview; this also allows you a chance to solidify some of the points you made during the interview, which may also make a good impression on your interviewers.
 - Follow up after the interview – Don't be afraid to reach out and contact the individuals who interviewed you if you haven't heard from them after a reasonable amount of time. If not selected for the internship, feel free to ask for feedback.